

THE OBSERVER

March 2023



LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church

Dear friends,

John Shugert, Rob LaMarsh, and I recently attended a fascinating series of workshops on the ways the Church is changing in terms of membership, generosity, and mission.

Of all the good things we learned, one of the areas I was most interested in is the way the relationship between membership and belonging is changing in the church. Many of us can remember a time when belonging meant being a member of a particular church.

What research is showing is that belonging and membership are no longer quite the same thing. There are some folks who have been members of a church for years, but they haven't yet felt a sense of belonging. And there are others who have never officially 'joined' the church, and yet they belong every bit as much as the 50 year member.

This suggests to me that belonging together is really what matters the most. Brené Brown, the social worker and researcher writes, "True belonging is not passive. It's not the belonging that comes with just joining a group. It's not fitting in or pretending or selling out because it's safer. It's a practice that requires us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be present with people without sacrificing who we are. We want true belonging, but it takes tremendous courage to knowingly walk into hard moments."

Belonging is not passive. It's not easy. It takes tremendous courage to show up with our whole selves to love and be loved by others.

I shared recently a story of belonging at LoveJoy United:

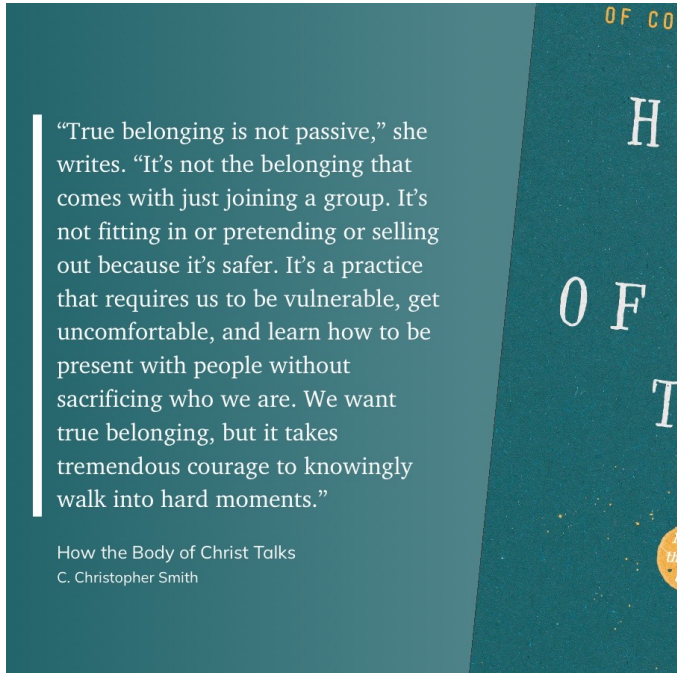
Right when we were barely beginning to open up the church, still in the throws of COVID, we held a rummage sale in the Fellowship Hall. We welcomed still-masked neighbors in to browse and shop. But when I arrived one morning, I spotted a couple I didn't recognize working among church volunteers.

I eventually introduced myself to them and they said something like, "oh, we know who you are, Pastor." And then they said they had found our church on Facebook Live, and that they belonged to the church online.

I love this story of belonging. Here are some people who even online felt a sense of belonging at LoveJoy United. And that sense of belonging led them into deeper community as they came and volunteered at the church.

How do we continue to welcome folks into our church - in person and online - as folks that already belong to what God is doing among us? How do we welcome their lives, their gifts, and their needs into our own lives? How can we show up with our whole selves - not just to be members - but to belong?

Christ's Peace,
Pastor Daniel



"True belonging is not passive," she writes. "It's not the belonging that comes with just joining a group. It's not fitting in or pretending or selling out because it's safer. It's a practice that requires us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be present with people without sacrificing who we are. We want true belonging, but it takes tremendous courage to knowingly walk into hard moments."

How the Body of Christ Talks
C. Christopher Smith

Daniel Ervin contact info: Church phone – 618.254.5880; cell – 704.380.0498
Email – daniel@lovejoyupc.org

CHILDREN & YOUTH



On **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26**, the LUPC children and youth ventured over to the **Wood River History Museum** for engaging experiences with our own **Rob LaMarsh** as our guide. Before carpooling over, we were served a spaghetti, salad, and cake meal, prepared by Tacoma and Sandy. A round table discussion accompanied the meal with topics about Lent and how preserving history enhances our lives, both culturally and for the church. It is joyful to hear students' points of view as they grow physically and spiritually. Following the meal, we carpoled over to the museum where



we were greeted by Rob. He explained the hand carved canoe on display and allowed the students to get in. It was made by a local artist from a tree trunk, using a hand chisel. A similar method was used by native Americans in the area.



Other artifacts on display throughout the museum caught the attention of the students, and Rob was an excellent docent for explaining local history represented by the items. Before leaving, Rob allowed the students to take a free postcard as a souvenir of the afternoon.



On Saturday, March 4, students will join other LUPC members to work at the Saturday Café at 1st Presbyterian in Alton.

Announcements

LoveJoy Lyceum Book Club:

Members of the Lyceum Book Club recently completed the reading list for the rest of the 2023 year (July through December):

JULY 19: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

AUGUST 16: Foster by Claire Keegan

SEPTEMBER 20: Rolling Nowhere by Ted Conover

OCTOBER 18: Fordlandia by Greg Granden

NOVEMBER 15: West With Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge

DECEMBER 13: (2nd Wednesday) Daemon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver



Hybrid Book Club Meeting

The book to be discussed on March 15 is LoveJoy Lyceum: **The Taking of Jemima Boone** by **Matthew Pearl**. Plan to join us via zoom at 7:00 either from your own home or at the church.

Congregational Fellowship Sunday, March 19

A lot of people have commented it would be wonderful if we could bring back Cookie Sunday or Coffee Hour after service on Sunday. This is to let you know we agree. We are going to call it **Fellowship Sunday**. That way we are not limiting the menu. We are going to start by doing this on the **third Sunday of the month only**. We will only have these one Sunday per month. Youth Quest is meeting on the second and fourth Sundays.

There will be a sign up list for those wanting to help host the Fellowship Sunday. **The first will be March 19** and will be sponsored by the Congregational Fellowship Committee.

At this time there are no plans for bringing back the First Sunday lunches. If anyone is interested in holding one please let the Fellowship Committee or the office know.



Church Spring Cleaning Day - March 25

Join us for a light day of clean up around the church grounds. More details to come.

January 2023 LUPC Financial Notes

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Checking Account Balance as of 1/31/23 | \$62,371.53 |
| Savings Account Balance as of 1/31/2023 | \$14,242.99 |
| Ending Balance as of 1/31/2023 | \$76,614.52 |

- Pledge Income Received: YTD Pledge total \$19,299.66
- Mission Market Fund: The current amount in the fund \$180,951.21 The interest rate is holding at 1.25 %

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Anyone who's been to the grocery store or filled their gas tank recently, knows that prices have risen. I, like most of you I'm sure, don't like it but haven't missed any meals because of it. There are some in our community, however, who are really struggling. Prior to these conditions, many have barely been able to keep their heads above water. But now, they are needing help.

Our food pantry tries to be there for those needing additional help with having enough food to feed their families. Our Good Samaritan Fund finds people needing help filling their gas tanks to get to work or to get to a doctor appointment. Or they may need help with a utility bill or whatever.

Both our food pantry and Good Samaritan Fund are hurting right now. So far this year our expenses have exceeded our income for both of these funds. So, if you can help, we, and those needing our assistance, would be most grateful. You can purchase an additional item or more when you're at the grocery store and put that in the grocery cart in the narthex when you're in the building. Or an amount for either fund can be added to your check if that's your preference. Another easy option is to go to www.lovejoyupc.org and click on the "give" button. It gives the option of how you want LUPC to designate your funds. Both the food pantry and Good Samaritan Fund are options you can choose. There are options to use your credit card or funds can be deducted from your bank account. It's just that simple.

We are, after all, a Matthew 25 congregation. If you are able, this is one way you can live into the Matthew 25 way of life. Thank you.

Food Pantry

You can drop off non-perishable items for the food pantry on Monday mornings between 9 am and 1 pm. The cart is by the front door. Thanks so much to those of you who continue to support our food pantry even though we're not in the building on Sunday mornings.

The Pantry is in need of shampoo, toothpaste, and toilet tissue.

Good Samaritan Fund

As we all know, these are not normal times. If you need some extra help meeting your bills or a gas voucher to make those necessary trips, please know that you can come on Mondays at 1:30 pm and we can help you.

Everything will be confidential. And if you can help support this fund, just mark your check for Good Samaritan Fund. We are here to help one another and those most vulnerable in our community.

Booth House and Saturday Café

If you have a heart for feeding the hungry, as Jesus taught that we should, helping with meals at the Booth House and/or Saturday Café is a great opportunity for you. The Booth House is a homeless shelter operated by the Salvation Army in Alton. They do not have a meal prepared for them on Sundays. Six times a year we have agreed to prepare the Sunday evening meal to feed the approximately 20 people they may have. During these pandemic times, meals are dropped off and they serve themselves. Saturday Café is a ministry of First Presbyterian in Alton, serving anyone needing a meal. We handle this meal on the first Saturday of March, June, September, and December. Let Brenda Donohoo or Karen Wilson know if you'd be willing to help with this.



Happy Birthday

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 19 |
| Ann French | Eaontae Coleman |
| 2 | Kendelle Pelot |
| Lindell Blackford | 21 |
| 5 | John III Rain |
| Amy Huebner | Pat Fletcher |
| 8 | 23 |
| Gloria Hunt | Barbara Elledge |
| 9 | Ethan C. Humbert |
| Claude Hunter, Jr. | 24 |
| Stephanie Lindquist | Joe Freeman |
| 10 | 26 |
| Miranda Inlow | Janice McKee |
| Linda Schiltz | Luke Workman |
| 11 | Ross Chapman |
| Nora Frank | 27 |
| Glenda Pelot | Al Goewey |
| 13 | 28 |
| Karen Auston | Daniel Ervin |
| 16 | Doris Miller |
| Shawn Huff | Doug Bristow |
| 18 | Valerie Freeman |
| Donny Hayes | 30 |
| Abigail Overstreet | Gavin Chapman |
| Alivia Luck | Tiffany Koenig Andrews |
| Leroy Duncan | |

A Communion

The teacher says come to the table.
Bring your friends
Twill, take the loaf of bread,
and break it.

Then Twill pour the wine in to the cup

Eat this in remembrance of me.

Drink this in remembrance of me.

For my friends, this is the is the
Communion.

Poet Laureate

Herbert J. Peel

Many Ways to Worship

We continue to gather in several ways at 10:15 AM on Sunday mornings as God's worshipping people. We hope you will join us online, by phone, or in-person. All three are good and faithful ways of worshipping. Online: Go to lovejoyupc.org/live and click 'connect Via Zoom.' Phone: Dial +1 (669) 900-6833 and then at the prompt enter: 611 784 858# long distance rates may apply) in Person: Participants are asked to remain masked and refrain from singing during the service. We can accommodate up to 50 people in-person. Zoom Adult Sunday School meets at 9 – 9:45 AM. Connect online or by phone according to the instructions above. Tech Deacons are available to help you get connected online or by phone. Call the church office for information.

March 2023

March

April

| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
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| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | | | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---------------------|
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 3/1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | 10:15a Bible Study (Hybrid) 11:30a Lunch Bunch | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Cernys | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Shugerts | Saturday Café |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 9a Choir Rehearsal 9a Hybrid Adult Sunday School 10:15a Hybrid Worship | 7p Lenten Small Group - TBD | 7p Lenten Small Group - Zoom | 10:15a Bible Study (Hybrid) 11:30a Lunch Bunch 6:30p Mission and Outreach 7p Evening Prayer (Zoom) | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Cernys | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Shugerts | |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Daylight Saving Time starts 9a Choir Rehearsal 9a Hybrid Adult Sunday School 10:15a Hybrid Worship 11:30a Building and Grounds 11:30a LoveJoy Youth | 9a Food Pantry 12:15p PEO Women's Meeting 7p Lenten Small Group - TBD | 9a Handbell Practice 7p Lenten Small Group - Zoom | 10:15a Bible Study (Hybrid) 11:30a Lunch Bunch 7p Evening Prayer (Zoom) | 1p ACE Committee Meeting 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Cernys | St. Patrick's Day 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Shugerts | |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 9a Choir Rehearsal 9a Hybrid Adult Sunday School 10:15a Hybrid Worship 11:30a YouthQuest | 7p Lenten Small Group - TBD | 9a Handbell Practice 6p Finance Meeting 7p Lenten Small Group - TBD | 10:15a Bible Study (Hybrid) 11:30a Lunch Bunch 7p Evening Prayer (Zoom) | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Cernys 6:30p Session Meeting | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Shugerts | Spring Cleaning Day |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 4/1 |
| 9a Choir Rehearsal 9a Hybrid Adult Sunday School 10:15a Hybrid Worship | 9a Food Pantry 7p Lenten Small Group - TBD | 9a Handbell Practice 7p Lenten Small Group - TBD | 10:15a Bible Study (Hybrid) 11:30a Lunch Bunch 7p Evening Prayer (Zoom) | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Cernys | 1:30p Lenten Small Group - Shugerts | |



2550 Rock Hill
Road Wood River,
IL 62095 Phone:
618-254-5880
Fax: 618-254-1288

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

